

Recreation

Management Intent

The intent of this plan is to protect and manage the historic route of the Iditarod Trail for its historic and recreational values, to provide the opportunity for public recreational access to and use of streams, wetlands, and certain lakes within the study area, and to maintain existing trail systems as described in this section.

Classification/Reservation

Iditarod Trail. The Iditarod Historic Trail corridor will be retained in public ownership. The state portion will be classified Public Recreation Lands. A right-of-way centerline for the corridor has been surveyed and entered into the public land records system. The corridor is 400 feet wide, 200 feet either side of centerline. The Willow Sub-basin Plan established a trail corridor width of 600 feet but allowed for reductions provided that the quality of recreational use of the trail could be maintained. The corridor was reduced as a compromise measure in order to make more class II and III soils available for agricultural use, while maintaining the integrity of the trail. The 400-foot corridor is consistent with the intent of the Willow Sub-Basin Plan. The 400-foot-wide corridor includes approximately 190 acres of class II soils and 55 acres of class III soils.

The Burns' cabin site will be retained in public ownership and classified Public Recreation. The site is completely within the 400 foot wide Iditarod trail corridor.

Other Recreational Areas. Small, state-owned parcels on Cow, Delyndia, Hock and Flathorn Lakes will be retained in public ownership and managed for public recreation. These sites are currently classified Public Recreation (they were originally identified for this use by DNR as part of the public interest land identification project in 1980). Two additional borough-owned parcels on Flathorn Lake will also be retained in public ownership and managed for public recreation. The northern site, 20 acres, (in Section 18, Township 16 North, Range 6 West) is adjacent to the state-owned recreation site. The southern site, 60 acres (in the NW1/4 of SE1/4 and SW1/4 of the NE1/4, Section 30, Township 16 North, Range 6 West), is on the east shore of the lake, at the end of the proposed secondary road and includes a peninsula of land formed by Fish Creek as it flows out of the lake. A borough-owned parcel at the north end of Cow Lake will also be retained in public ownership and managed for public recreation. This will be especially important if the Moraine Ridge road system goes through the state owned parcel at the southeast end of the lake (see the Master Plan Map, page 47).

Table 2

Public Recreation Lands on Lakes

Name Approximate Acreage

Cow Lake	10 acres (existing; state) 40 acres (proposed; borough)
Delyndia Lake	10 acres (existing; state)
Butterfly Lake	0 - (all lands adjacent to the lake within the plan area are in private ownership.)
Redshirt Lake	0 - (all lands adjacent to the lake within the plan area are in private ownership.)
Hock Lake	10 acres (existing; state)
Flathorn Lake North	25 acres total 5 acres (existing useable acres; state) 20 acres (proposed; borough)
Flathorn Lake South	60 acres (proposed; borough)

Refer to Master Plan Map, page 47, for location of sites.

Public access to Fish Creek and its tributaries will be provided by a system of publicly-owned buffer areas along the streams. Along the southern three miles of Fish Creek, where the stream widens out into what is almost a lake, the buffer will extend 500 feet back from ordinary high water. This wider buffer begins in Section 16, Township 16 North, Range 6 West and follows the stream down to Flathorn Lake. See the Master Plan map at 1:24,000 on file at the Southcentral District Office of Division of Land and Water Management or in the geoprocessor at the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys. The purpose of the 500 foot-wide buffer is to ensure that an adequate amount of useable land at the top of the steep bluffs along the creek is retained in public ownership for future public use. In addition, two small sites on the south side of the creek, about one mile and three miles from its mouth, respectively, will be retained in public ownership for public use as access

points to the creek and possibly for tent camping. The sites are about 10 acres and 7 acres, respectively, (in addition to the 500 foot buffer). They will have road access and eventually parking and other facilities. Refer to page 61 for a description of the buffer areas further upstream and the township maps (in the official Department of Natural Resources copies of the final plan) for their location. Stream buffers will be retained in public ownership. On state land, they will be classified as Wildlife Habitat/Public Recreation Lands.

Recreation sites have been reserved at four primary road-stream intersections (see the Master Plan, page 47). These will provide access to Fish Creek and Homestead Creek. There is a 15 acre site at the intersection of the main east-west road with Homestead Creek and another 15 acre site west of the intersection of the east-west road with Fish Creek. Both are on borough land. There is a 25 acre site on state land at the intersection of the main north-south road with Fish Creek and a 10 acre site on state land at the intersection of a local east-west road with Fish Creek. These will be more precisely located in the field prior to agricultural tract survey by the Division of Land and Water Management in consultation with the Division of Parks. On state land all recreation sites will be classified Public Recreation and retained in public ownership to be managed by the Division of Land and Water Management in consultation with the Division of Parks. On borough land all recreation sites will be retained in public ownership.

Management Guidelines

Iditarod Trail

1. The historic Iditarod trail corridor is closed to mineral entry and coal prospecting and leasing.
2. Use of the present Iditarod race route will be preserved by a temporary easement that will be placed on the sale tracts if the historic route is not cleared for racing and ready for use by the time the agricultural lands are to be sold. The temporary easement will be relinquished when the historic route is ready for use.
3. Use of the historic Iditarod trail corridor by heavy-duty motorized vehicles will be authorized by permit only during the winter season when there is six inches of frost in the ground and a foot of snow cover. Such use will be permitted only if no other reasonable alternative exists. Crossings to allow equipment passage across the corridor shall be designated in the farm conservation plans and cleared during the clearing process (see Willow Sub-basin Plan guidelines - trail corridors). On land purchased from the state, these crossings should be approved by Division of Parks.
4. Tree cutting in the Iditarod trail corridor. See Forestry guideline 13, page 58.
5. Highway pull-offs will be designed so as to facilitate public viewing of the Iditarod Trail sled-dog race wherever such a facility also meets

other needs. If pull-offs are not practical, other provisions will be made for race viewing such as use of shoulders or separate areas which are cleared and used only when frozen. This shall be determined on-site with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Committee, and the Division of Parks during the road design phase prior to disposal.

6. The Burns' cabin site will be left in its present condition without restoration of the actual cabin, since this site was designated a "level three" minimum management site by the Joint State/Federal Iditarod Trail Study. Minimum management means that the site should continue to be protected in accordance with established state and federal regulations.

Other Recreational Areas.

7. Stream and wetlands access sites.

- a. Public access to the streams and wetlands will be provided by publicly owned corridors along the streams, by intermittent road access to the streams, and by section line easements. Where appropriate, there will be additional public access to the streams via public access easements at certain farm tract boundaries. Such easements will be determined during the tract-survey phase prior to disposal by the Division of Land and Water Management and Matanuska-Susitna Borough in consultation with the Division of Parks.

- b. At the time of road design, adequate pullouts and parking should be provided for public use of streams and wetlands.

8. Lake sites. The two proposed public recreation sites on Flathorn Lake will be located on-site by the Division of Land and Water Management and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in consultation with the Division of Parks. The approximate location of these sites is shown on the Master Plan Map, page 47. The sites will be surveyed out during the agricultural tract survey and retained in public ownership. A public boat launch facility should be developed on this lake; the Division of Parks and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough should jointly determine the best location.

9. Trails (other than Iditarod). The Yohn Lake-to-Susitna River and the Nancy Lake Loop trails will generally be preserved as they now exist. These trails generally fall within wetland areas, do not conflict with planned agricultural development, and present no conflict with wetland management. Use of these trails by heavy duty motorized vehicles will be authorized by permit only during winter months where there is at least six inches of frost in the ground and a foot of snow cover, or during periods when the topography and vegetation will not be damaged by their use. The Yohn Lake to Susitna River trail will be routed around the class II or III soils in tract 37. The Nancy Lake Loop trail will be rerouted around tract M1. With these minor reroutings, these winter trails will go through large publicly-owned wetlands and thus fulfill the Willow Sub-basin Plan's requirements of a 300 foot wide corridor.

The Connecting Trail will also be retained in public ownership with a width of 100 feet up to its intersection with the historic Iditarod Trail. The trail corridor will be rerouted through lands to be retained in public ownership in Sections 31 and 32, Township 17 North, Range 5 West, Seward Meridian and Section 1, Township 16 North, Range 5 West, Seward Meridian (see Road Phases Map). The existing easement along the section line will preserve the connection with the Iditarod race trail until the historic trail is cleared.

The Susitna Flats branch trail, tractor trail, and Susitna Flats trails will be phased out after provision of adequate alternate access. These trails cross areas that are planned for agricultural development, and existing information does not indicate that they represent a significant recreational opportunity that should be kept intact as is. Alternate access will be provided via the planned primary and secondary road system which will have corridors wide enough to incorporate trails within them. The trails will be vacated following construction of the primary and secondary roads that will provide the alternate access.